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For Immediate Release  
March 17, 2005

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## **Legislation to battle aquatic nuisance species introduced**

**LANSING** – Legislation introduced today in the Senate would help battle aquatic nuisance species in the Great Lakes, Sen. Patty Birkholz announced.

Senate Bill 332, sponsored by Birkholz, would authorize the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to enter into an agreement with other Great Lakes basin states to create the Great Lakes Aquatic Nuisance Coalition. The coalition will be charged with eliminating this damaging form of biological pollution in the Great Lakes.

“Eradicating foreign species is of utmost importance if we want to keep the Great Lakes clean and healthy for generations to come,” said Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township. “It is my hope that Michigan and the other Great Lakes basin states can work together to help rid our lakes of these species that are destroying our natural ecosystem.”

There are currently 162 aquatic nuisance species in the Great Lakes, including the sea lamprey, zebra mussel, spiny water flea and Eurasian ruffe. On average, a new species is introduced every eight months.

Aquatic nuisance species are commonly introduced to the Great Lakes through ballast water discharge from ocean-going vessels. Although laws are in place to prevent ballast water dumping, certain exemptions in the Clean Water Act are still allowing this harmful practice to continue, allowing more and more biological pollution in the Great Lakes.

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